HARAMBEE FLAME

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KUUMBA NIGHT AT MALONE CENTER

On Saturday, February 23rd., the Malone Community Center in Lincoln conducted Kuumba(Creativity) Night. The program, which was organized by Leola Bullock as an adjunct to the African History Month Art Exhibit at the State Office Building, ran from approximately 6:45 to 9:00 p.m. and was attended by about thirty adults and children. It featured an exhibition of paintings, drawings, artifacts, clothing, books and other materials of historical importance.

Speakers for the program were Matthew Stelly, Director of the Malone Community Center; W.M.E. we Langa; and Barbara Williams. In addition, Zareta Harris and Rosie Sims presented creativity in song.

Matthew Stelly's presentation took the Sisters and Brothers in attendance through the cultural, political, and religious history of African people from very early times through the present. He spoke about the birth of the institution of slavery, the colonialization of Africa, the political struggles of African people in the U.S., etc. Using that speaking style which has gained him the nickname, "machine-gun-mouth," Brother Matthew covered this wide range of subject matter and historical time in fewer than fifteen minutes. It was clear that the listeners found Matthew's address to be very informative and thought-provoking.

Barbara Williams made use of traditional African garments, native African

"FAMILY & SOCIALIZATION"- H.A.C.O.

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization held its "Family & Socialization" program on the evening of February 19th. at the Nebraska State Prison in Lincoln. This program was designed to be an educational and inspirational experience for H.A.C.O. members, members of our families, and other African people from the outside community. However, due to an about-face on the part of prison officials, the family component, with respect to participation, was scratched. In addition, the person who was to give the address on the role played by the family in the socialization process did not show up.

Despite these and other problems, the "Family & Socialization" program did transpire and was marked by very well-received and interesting presentations by both community persons and H.A.C.O. members. Vickey Parks, founder of Fahari Enterprises, delivered remarks on the importance of our giving a strong sense of cultural identity to our children, read passages from some of the literature for American-born African children, and talked about the types and availability of literature distributed by Fahari Enterprises. After the conclusion of the speaking portion of the program, several people checked out the Sister's book display and spoke with Vickey and her husband, Charles.

Coming in April... AFRICAN POETS

KUUMBA NIGHT

artifacts, and exhibited paintings to bring understanding to her listeners of the beauty and complexity of traditional African culture. With soft-spoken clarity, the Sister effectively stimulated the curiosity of the group and made use of the first-hand knowledge of a Brother from Kenya who was present.

Brother we Langa also made use of some of the exhibited art in speaking about African culture and creativity and he stressed the importance of American-born Africans identifying with Africa.

Following these addresses and the very moving music by Sisters Zareta and Rosie, there was discussion. It covered a wide range of topics. But two seemed to dominate, the question of relations between American-born African men and Caucasian women and that of the roles played by Christianity in both the oppression of African people and our struggles against that oppression. The discussion on these and other issues was enthusiastic and, at times, intense. The primary character of the discussion would best be described as "spirit of kinship."

Matthew, the Malone Community Center Director, states that he plans for there to be more such get-togethers at the Center.

MENTAL ILLNESS: NEGROSIS

February is over with now. A good time to reflect on and examine who we are. But the question of who one is is both an objective and a subjective one. Objectively speaking, we African folks in the U.S. are simply African people born in the U.S. But subjectively speaking, the question is much more complicated. It is a question of consciousness, of how we see ourselves, what we see ourselves as.

(cont. on p. 3)

FAMILY & SOCIAL ZATION

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization Chairman, Ajabu(Alan Hardin), delivered an address which highlighted the present condition of African people in the U.S. Following Ajabu's address, we heard presentations from Matthew Stelly and from H.A.C.O. members Shakur Abdullah, Asa Carter, Ezra Wright, Darwin Robinson, and Mondo. The address given by Matthew spoke of the role American institutions play in the socialization of U.S.-born Africans. He underlined the importance of our understanding the process of socialization and developing ways to combat its destructive effects.

After the formal portion of the program was completed, H.A.C.O. members and guests checked out the Fahari Enterprises book display, consumed refreshments, and rapped. A video-tape of a recent performance at the prison by Leroy & Co., an African-American Classical Music/Jazz ensemble assembled for this performance. Musicians included: Leroy Brashears-trumpet
Luigi Waites-vibes
Andy Hall-bass
Wardell Smith-drums
James Farrell-keyboards
Mondo-guitar
Bobby Griffo-saxophone

$100 FOR FAMINE RELIEF

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization has contributed $100.00 to BARAC(Black American Response to African Crisis) for use in combatting hunger in Africa's famine-struck Sahel region. We have chosen to publicize this fact in hopes that it will move other African organizations in the Omaha-Lincoln area to give assistance to our Sisters and Brothers across the water.

MENTAL ILLNESS..

United Negro College Fund, National Council of Negro Women...This not the decade of the fifties. This is 1985! What in the world is a negro? Dr. Frances Welsing describes the condition in which a person denies/rejects his or her ethnic self as "mental illness." Taking into account the prevalent rejection by U.S.-born African people of their African identity, let's take Sister Welsing's designation one step furthur and give mental illness a more specific name--"negrosis."

And what is this "negrosis"? It is a condition in which an American-born African views him or herself, in one basic sense or another, as a "negro," denying his or her African identity. Can we identify symptoms of this disease? Certainly. Let us list some of them: an utter inability to move one's lips, jaw, and tongue in such a manner that one can say "African" in reference to him or her self; an acute slobbering and breaking out into a cold sweat when meeting a Caucasian of the complementary sex; an irresistable inclination to alter one's physical features in order to look more "American"; a chronic obsession with suits and ties, material status symbols, and so forth with the intent of being impressive; a severe malfocusing of the eyes by which native Africans are viewed as unsophisticated, backward, and foreign; gross fear of doing anything which might make one appear to have been disloyal to one's white friends--more commonly known as "Coretta-Scott-Kingism."

These are some of the symptoms of negrosis. What does negrosis lead to? --uncontrollable laughter on the part of American institutions which thrive off of our continued illness.

In view of its <u>overall</u> record with respect to African people in the U.S., support of that party's presidential bid in this past election by African people was, at best, ill-advised and, at worst, grossly absurd. But when

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Nebraska State Prisoners Art Guild will have a group showing March 15-17 at the Blue Lion Center in Omaha at 24th. & Lake St.

Due to recent prison administration shuffling of prisoner organization meeting schedules, the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization now meets on Sundays and Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. Please contact us for further information.

Check out "African Synthesis" on KZUM (99.3 fm and 89.5 fm) every Saturday from noon until 2:00. It presents a lively and provocative mix of African-American Classical Music/Jazz, traditional African music, and contemporary African dance music. The program also features discussion of issues of importance to African people, both here and abroad. Call-ins are welcomed.

MENTAL ILLNESS..

we bear in mind the Reagan Administration's policies with respect to the poor in this country, to the system of apartheid in Azania, to Grenada(which is populated almost entirely by African people), etc.; it is truly remarkable that we allow those of us who actually state their support for Reagan to run programs in our communities or to, in any other way, maintain respectability among us.

There are those in our communities who claim to speak for us, to act in our behalf. And while they may have good intentions, it certainly must be asked of them: How can they really act or speak for us when they choose to live with Caucasians out in Suburbia? How can they expect to represent us when they identify with Greek fraternities and/or sororities? Moreover, how can one truly be expected to <u>represent</u> African people when one cannot even <u>identify</u> with with Africa, with us?

(cont. on p. 4)

MENTAL ILLNESS..

There is nothing whatsoever wrong with being of European ancestry, if one is, in fact, of European ancestry. But there is something wrong, something smacking of mental illness, if one identifies him or herself as European when one is, in fact, African. And it is this which is negrosis--a state of consciousness in which an African born in America rejects his or her own identity in favor of those things which of the dominant/Caucasian culture. It is this state of consciousness that retards both our individual and collective growth and leaves us vulnerable to every imaginable form of subordination.

Every one of us, particularly those of us who claim and/or want to act in the interests of African people must examine the things we do and ask ourselves if we are being who we claim we are. Negrosis is a serious disease and one which we must purge from ourselves if we are to progress --indeed, if we are to survive.

-the editor

A FOLKTALE

"Kalulu the hare was skipping along a path in the bush one day when he met Elephant. 'Greetings, Elephant,' said Kalulu. 'You are very strong. I always used to hear that you were the strongest of all of us animals, but it really isn't true, you know. Lots of people say that I am stronger than you.'

"'You?' trumpeted Elephant. 'You puny little runt?'

"'I'll tell you what,' said the hare. 'I'll challenge you to a tug of war, and if you win, I'll admit that you are the stronger.'

"Then Kalulu produced a long rope and tied one end of it to Elephant's leg. 'Right, Elephant, I'll go to the other end of the rope. When you hear me shout 'go,' you can start pulling.' He bounded off into some tall reeds where he had seen Hippo browsing.

"'Greetings, Hippo. People say that you aren't all that strong any more--in fact, I know I could beat you at a tug of war.'

"'Nonsense,' grunted Hippo. Scornfully he allowed the rope to be tied to his leg. Then Kalulu disappeared into the undergrowth and shouted 'go.' The rope tightened as Elephant and Hippo tugged and strained against each other while Kalulu, hidden in the grass, laughed and laughed and laughed."

--an African folktale recounted by Gabriel Ellison in the March edition of WILDLIFE INTERNATIONAL

DIRECTORY OF AFRICAN ARTISTS

In our efforts, during African History Month, we discovered that it is not an easy thing to find out who the African artists in the Omaha-Lincoln area are. The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization is not the only group which has had difficulty getting in contact and/or discovering the existence of African folks in this area who are sculpters, painters, story-tellers, musicians, dancers, etc.

There is a need, both for the sake of groups wanting artists to perform and/or exhibit and artists seeking exposure, for a directory of African artists in the Omaha-Lincoln area to be developed. Such a directory should include those involved in the visual arts, performing arts, creative writing, and other forms of creative expression. We hope that this mentioning of the need will serve to get the proverbial ball rolling.

Correction: In the last paragraph on p. 3, "that party's.." refers to the Democratic Party.

From other sources

Understanding One Aspect of Africa's Famine

In past issues of the FLAME, we have discussed a number of aspects and/or causes of the current famine in the Sahel(Sub-Saharan) region of Africa: manipulation of African national economies by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, the U.S. and European governments and corporations; the drought; corruption on the part of certain government officials in various nations in Africa; etc. The following is coverage of one aspect and/or cause of the famine which we have not discussed. It is "desertification," the process by which desert expands to include areas which had previously not been desert. These excerpts are taken from the March 1985 edition of INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE.

"In one study, French ecologist Henri LeHouerou(now at Texas A&I University) has shown that more than half of the lush alfa grass steppe that covered 5,000 square miles in Tunisia at the beginning of the century is largely bare because of overexploitation, especially overgrazing. In the Hodna region of Algeria, pine and juniper forests have been turned into a moonscape of limestone bedrock by firewood cutting. 'I am very pessimistic,' says LeH ouerou. 'I believe that much of the Sahel will be unusable for livestock in 30 to 50 years because of the elimination of shrubs and trees...'

"The nomadic way of life, once widespread in the world's arid regions, kept people in balance with their environment. But that balance has tipped because of modern governments, development agencies, world health organizations and population pressure. Medicine keeps undernourished animals from dying during droughts; national boundaries cut off traditional migration routes; hundreds of deep wells attract large numbers of people and animals to their water; and nations try to grow peanuts and other cash crops on marginal land.

"Intentions are usually good, but the results in many cases have been nothing short of disastrous. Populations of both people and animal herds have soared, causing overgrazing, the cutting of deep-rooted acacia trees(which supply vital nitrogen to the soil) for firewood and charcoal, and the spread of dryland farming into traditional nomadic lands.

"...sections of the Negev(Desert) supported lush orchards and wheat fields 2,000 years ago--despite an annual rainfall of only four inches. The secret of these ancientfarmers was runoff agriculture, an elaborate but conceptually simple system of turning hillsides into giant funnels that bring rainwater to terraced valley fields. (Michael) Evenari led a team to reconstruct two ancient farms. Now olive, fig and pistachio trees, along with wheat and barley, grow in the center of the desert.

"The few successful large-scale projects are those backed up by governments with both real control over local people and a willing labor force. The Algerian army has planted strips of pine and eucalyptus trees several hundred miles long, the only part of UNEP (United Nations Environment Program)-sponsored North African Green Belt that has come to fruition. Before the Islamic revolution, Iran reclaimed thousands of acres of desert by spraying asphalt-like petroleum residues on sand dunes and planting seeds of trees and shrubs. The oil both stabilizes the sand and retains moisture, allowing vegetation to get extablished. The trees then add to the soil's ability to hold water, making the land more fertile.

"'The most important desertification trend is the degradation of irrigated lands,' says Gilbert White of the University of Colorado. 'It's terribly important and there is very little information.' Irrigation water contains various amounts of salt that slowly build up unless soil drainage is excellent.

"With careful planning, salinization

From other sources

can be prevented. Irrigation can be reduced to trickles of water piped to individual plants, as in Isreal, drainage systems can be installed or salt-tolerant crops cultivated."

U.S. In Partnership With Apartheid

"'Literally, without U.S. corporate investment, Pretoria could not run its very expensive and complex apartheid system,' Dr. Jean Sindab, director of the Washington Office on Africa(WOA), told the lawmakers. She explained that U.S. firms account for 70% of the funds invested in the South African computer business, 44% of the petroleum market and 20% of the automobile industry. WOA, part of the research arm of the Free South Africa Movement, is sponsored by U.S. churches and trade unions.

Some 250 to 350 firms have direct investments in South Africa worth about $2.3 billion, Sindab stated. Over the last four years U.S. commercial bank loans to South Africa jumped 332% to a total of $4.5 billion, she added. American trade with the apartheid state amounts to another $4.5 billion, making the U.S. Pretoria's largest trading partner. Sindab noted that a secret State Department study, 'U.S. Investment in South Africa: The Hidden Pieces,' puts total U.S. investment at $14.6 billion."

--Excerpted from page 5 of the Feb. 13, '85 edition of THE GUARDIAN

Upheaval In Azania

"Two days of mass upheaval in the town of Crossroads topped off a new wave of rebellion that swept across Azania(South Africa) in the middle of February. At least thirteen people have been killed and more than 150 injured in combat with the South African police. Latest reports indicate that the twon remains sealed off, with the police surrounding the perimeter and the people manning barricades in the streets and attacking any government vehicles attempting to enter the town.

"More a permanent squatters camp than a town, Crossroads is a triangular patch situated at the intersection of two highways a few miles outside of Cape Town. Somewhere between 65,000 and 100,000 people are housed in huts made of scrap metal and canvas. The camp developed as thousands of black Azanians migrated to Cape Town in search of work. Since the Cape province was officially designated a 'colored labor preference area,' accommodations for black Azanians were severely limited. The situation gave rise to numerous 'illegal' squatters camps, with Crossroads being one of the largest.

"Over the years the regime has consistently attacked and demolished the various camps, transporting the 'legal' residents to a permanent township and sending all others to one bantustan or another.

"And Crossroads was only one of the areas that blew up over the last week. The townships surrounding Johannesburg were once again the scens of battles between the police and the Azanian people. In Katlehong township thousands of people fought a pitched battle with the police for hours after a meeting called to protest a rent hike was banned. In addition to these townships (where, according to the WASHINGTON POST, South African security officials have begun to view 'violent upheaval' as endemic) a number of others across the country, including rural mining and farming areas, have begun to erupt in rebellion."

--Excerpted from the Feb. 22 edition of REVOLUTIONARY WORKER, page 4

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization. Editor, Woapshitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa.

In Order To Keep The Blackman At Peace & In Unity Always

Ye are the children of one father, provided for by his care and the breast of one mother who has given ye suck. Let the bonds of affections, therefore, unite thee with thy brother that peace and happiness may dwell in thy father's house.

And when ye separate into the world, remember the relation that bindeth you to love and unity. Prefer not a stranger before thy own blood. If thy brother is in adversity, assist him. If thy sister is in trouble, forsake her not. So shall the fortunes of the father contribute to the support of his whole race and his care be continuous to you all, in your your love, to each other.

--Warren Moore

Vanish

"Daddy, what kind of fossil bones are these?" the young European boy asked his father as they toured the museum of natural history. "Well, son," the youngh boy's father said as he triumphantly stood at attention. "These are the bones of an African-American of the year 2010. They died and wasted away because they lost their culture and history here in Amerikkka."

The young boy stood there with a puzzled and bewildered look upon his face as he stared at the bones through the glass case. "What, Daddy. How can such a thing be?" the young boy asked, comin' out of his intense stare. "Son," the boy's father now smilin' an obnoxious smile, "they tried to live as Europeans rather than as Africans and, in the process, they became extinct, just like the dinosaurs you've seen today."

--Shakur Abdullah

African Poets In Nebraska

In April, instead of the regular monthly edition of the HARAMBEE FLAME, there will be a special edition, FLAME: AFRICAN POETS IN NEBRASKA. This special edition will be free to subscribers but will cost $1.00 for non-subscribers. You are urged to submit your poems for this special edition. Send your submissions, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to: Mondo; HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68502-0500. Submissions must be received by March 20, 1985.